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Message Text

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44
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
---------- 113737
O R 191400Z DEC 74
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9644
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 7464

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TREASRY FOR PARSKY

E.O.: 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIN, EGEN, ECIN, EAID, SA, US
SUBJ: MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE ON RESCHEDULING OF
U.S. ECONOMIC COMMISSION

REF : JIDDA 7393

BEGIN SUMMARY: MIN STATE FOR FINANCE MUHAMMAD ABA AL-KHAYL CONFIRMED SAG INTEREST IN MAINTAINING MOMENTUM ON ECONOMIC COMMISSION. TIME AND PLACE FOR FIRST FORMAL MEETING OF COM-MISSION UNDECIDED. MINISTER STATE MAY RPT MAY DECIDE TO COME TO U.S. BUT NOT IN EARLY JANUARY. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MEETING DEC 18 IN JIDDA, MINISTER STATE FOR FINANCE MUHAMMAD ABA AL-KHAYL SAID THAT DISCUSSIONS SEVERAL MINISTERS WITH PRINCE FAHD ON DEC 16 HAD MADE CLEAR THAT SAUDI GOVERN-MENT MINISTRIES ARE DEEPLY INTERESTED IN CONTINUED EFFORTS OF U.S.-SAUDI ECONOMIC COMMISSION. MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS DISCUSSED WITH PRINCE FAHD PROGRESS OF WORKING GROUPS AND EXPERTS. MCUH INTEREST WAS EXPRESSED IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING, IN THE REORGANIZATION OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN THE KINGDOM, AND IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT. HE
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ALSO MENTIONED THE NEED FOR REORGANIZATION OF THE STATISTICAL

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DEPARTMENT OF HIS OWN MINISTRY.

2. MENTION WAS MADE BY THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE INVESTMENT GUARANTEE AGREEMENT (SAUDI DECISION MAKERS STILL ARE THINKING IN TERMS OF A SIMPLE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS RATHER THAN A FORMAL AGREEMENT.) MINISTER SAID THAT SUCH AN INVESTMENT AGREEMENT WOULD GIVE MARKET BENEFITS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAUDI INDUSTRY. HE NOTED BRIEFLY THAT THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING A RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENT FOR SAUDI INVESTMENT IN THE U.S.

3. MINISTER ALSO EARMARKED THEIR INTEREST IN AGRICULTURE, ESPECIALLY IN DESALINATION RESEARCH AND LARGE SCALE AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS "LIKE HARADH". THE AMBASSADOR ASKED IF THEY REMAINED INTERESTED IN RESEARCHING OTHER ENERGY SOURCES SUCH AS SOLAR AND MINISTER INDICATED THEY HAD GREAT INTEREST IN SUCH WORK.

4. ABA AL-KHAYL SAID THAT HE WISHED TO WORK WITH INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES ON ALL PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS "SO THAT THE DECISION DOES NOT COME FROM OUTSIDE". HE SAID THAT EXPERTS WOULD CONTINUE TO COME UNDER THE COMMISSION AND THAT THE COMMISSION'S WORK WOULD BE STRENGTHENED. A NEW MAN WOULD SOON REPLACE DR. SOLAIM, PROBABLY SOMEONE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF RIYADH.

5. AS SOMEWHAT OF A SURPRISE, ABA AL-KHAYL SAID THAT HE HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHAT HE WOULD PROPOSE AS TO TIMING OR PLACE FOR THE FIRST ECONOMIC COMMISSION MEETING. (NO MENTION WAS MADE OF THE FACT THAT HE HAD STILL NOT INFORMED PRINCE FAHD OF SECRETARY SIMON'S PROPOSED DEFERRAL TO LATE FEBRUARY.) HE SAID THAT HE MIGHT GO TO THE U.S. BUT NOT IN JANUARY AND HE WANTED TO POSTPONE MAKING A DECISION UNTIL JUST AFTER THE PILGRIMAGE FEAST IS ENDED. IN ANSWER TO A QUERY, HE SAID THAT IF ASST. SECRETARY PARSKY WOULD LIKE TO COME, HE WOULD BE WELCOME.

6. REGARDING THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE HAD HIMSELF QUERIED THE KING'S CLOSEST ADVISOR. DR. RASHAD PHARAON, ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO ABOUT IT. THE MATTER STILL HAD TO BE TAKEN UP IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. HE HAD NOTED THAT EVERYONE UNDERSTOOD THE NECESSITY FOR THE AGREEMENT
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AND INDICATED THAT HE ANTICIPATED NO REAL DIFFICULTIES.

7. EMBASSY JUDGES THAT TIMING OF FIRST MEETING AND PLACE WILL NOT BE SETTLED BEFORE JANUARY 1. MEANWHILE, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE PRELIMINARY AGENDA AS DISCUSSED BY WASHINGTON AGENCIES LATE WEEK AND EXPERTS REPORTS, PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED, ON MANPOWER AND EDUCATION.
AKINS

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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED PARSKY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMITTEE MEETINGS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974JIDDA07464
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740369-0606
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741223/aaaaathn.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 74 JIDDA 7393
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14-Aug-2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <24 MAR 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE ON RESCHEDULING OF U.S. ECONOMIC COMMISSION
TAGS: EFIN, EGEN, ECIN, EAID, SA, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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